

Proposed Annexation of Winnipeg.

SPEECH OF HON. ZACHARIAH CHANDLER, OF MICHIGAN,

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, APRIL 22, 1870.

The next resolution on the Calendar was the following, submitted by Mr. CHANDLER on the 19th instant:

Resolved. That the President of the United States be, and he hereby is, requested to appoint two or more commissioners, or other diplomatic agents, to open negotiations with the people of Winnipeg, with a view to the annexation of that district of country to the United States as a Territory or as a State.

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. President, I offer this resolution in the interest of peace, of good neighborhood, and of good-fellowship as between Great Britain and the United States of America. It is rumored, I know not with what truth, that the Dominion of Canada is about to send an army to the Red River settlement to put down the government that now exists there. Whether that rumor be true or not I cannot say; but I wish to show before I move the reference of this resolution that it would be a very injudicious act on the part of the Dominion to attempt that thing.

Now, Mr. President, why should we not open negotiations with the people of the Winnipeg settlement? There is a government which has been established for more than six months, a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." Two attempts have been made to overthrow that government by the Dominion, and both of those attempts have ignominiously failed. In one instance the attempt was made to organize the savages of that region, officered by a Dominion officer, to put down this government; but, sir, that as well as the other attempt to put down this people's government was overthrown, and the government of Winnipeg has remained unquestioned since last November, except in those two instances.

Mr. President, why should we not open negotiations with these people? The people of the United States have decreed that the land of this continent of North America belongs to the people inhabiting that land. The Government of the United States has said

to the whole world, "Here is your home, if you see fit to come in and occupy this goodly land;" and the Government of the United States simply charges the citizen of the world the actual expense of putting up the boundary stakes and lines and limits, to wit, ten dollars for each lot. We say to the whole world, "Come in and occupy this land;" and they are coming by thousands and hundreds of thousands annually, and by millions in every decade. But, sir, in contradistinction to this decree that has gone forth to all the world, here is a Dominion which declares that this land belongs, to whom? To the Crown, not the people. To the Crown of Great Britain belongs this vast territory, says this Dominion established on our borders. These two systems are so diametrically antagonistical that they cannot exist side by side. One or the other must go down. Either this continent of North America is for the people who occupy it or it is for the Crown.

When the southern rebellion broke out and Fort Sumter was fired upon the British Government did not wait three days before it acknowledged the belligerent rights of the rebels. No, sir, they did not wait three hours; for they issued the proclamation of neutrality before they heard of the firing upon Sumter. But allow that they had heard of the firing upon Sumter; here were seventy men in a fort in Charleston harbor fired on; and there were thirty-odd million people belonging to these United States; and yet, sir, the moment the first gun was fired at Fort Sumter the British Government made haste to acknowledge the belligerent rights of our rebels.

But my friend from Massachusetts will say, "How about the Alabama claims? You are complicating the Alabama claims?" No, sir; I am doing no such thing, for I gave notice three or four years ago that I would never again call up the Alabama claims, or consider them under any conceivable state of fact. I then put on record a mortgage against the

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dominion of Great Britain lying north of us of \$2,200,000,000, and I simply propose now to levy execution in part. That is all. The time has not quite arrived to foreclose and take possession of the whole, but the time has arrived to open negotiations for a goodly portion.

Mr. President, the Hudson bay territory, which is now under the government of Winnipeg, contained in 1861 a population of seventy-one thousand souls. It comprises the whole territory lying north of us where the waters empty into this Hudson bay. It extends from the coast of Labrador to British Columbia. All of this vast interior of the continent is now in the possession and under the government of the people of Winnipeg. It is for that territory [pointing it out on the map] that I propose now to negotiate—as large almost as a continent. We paid \$7,000,000 for this small strip you see on the map, ice-bound Alaska, three years ago; and now the people of Winnipeg come and offer us this whole vast territory for the privilege of becoming citizens of these United States.

Sir, I call upon the Committee on Foreign Relations to give this subject their earnest and immediate and favorable consideration. Here is a "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people," that has remained unquestioned for six months asking for annexation to the United States. Shall we turn a cold shoulder upon that people and upon that vast territory that they propose to proffer us as a free gift? I trow not, sir. I believe that the time has arrived when these negotiations should be opened, and opened in earnest. My friend, the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, was slow to adopt my views upon the Alabama claims and our difficulties with Great Britain. He opposed me year after year for four long years; but his mind is progressive, and at the end of four years, discovering his error, he came up to my standard, and I now entreat him to go a step further and come up to my standard now.

Mr. DRAKE. Get a peg higher into Winnipeg. [Laughter.]

Mr. CHANDLER. It will be observed that this Hudson bay territory comprises nearly the whole of the British possessions. Here is the Dominion, comprising Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, &c.; but it is a mere speck upon the map. Then, here is British Columbia, which is not included in the Hudson bay settlement. But this is not all, for it is not only the people of Winnipeg who are suing for admission or for annexation to the United States, but British Columbia with one loud voice sends up the desires of her people to be admitted into this great nation, and here is Nova Scotia on the extreme east almost unanimous for annexation to the United States.

Mr. President, what is the title of Great Britain to this vast continent? I have said

that she owes us, and I have put the mortgage on record, \$2,200,000,000, or one half the whole expenses of the war. My friend from Massachusetts concurs with me that she is justly, honorably, and equitably bound to pay us one half the expenses of our war for her course during that war. She cannot pay it and we never expect her to pay it in coin. We simply say to Great Britain, "Give us a quit-claim deed to this continent and we will forgive you the debt, and nothing short of that." But, sir, what does she give us? Great Britain has not now and never had title to one single acre of land on this continent. She gives us a quit-claim deed of what she never owned. Some of her explorers, many of them driven out by the persecutions of the British Government, discovered headlands on this continent and raised the British flag; and upon that baseless foundation rests her entire title to this soil.

But my friend from Massachusetts will say, "Has she not the right of conquest?" Yes, sir; and how much right did she get by that conquest? She got the exact right possessed by the conquered and no more, not one iota more than the conquered possessed; and the conquered possessed no more right than she. But the Senator will say, "Did you not acknowledge the right in the purchase of Louisiana?" Yes, sir; we purchased Louisiana for a small sum. But suppose France to-day held Louisiana and this northwest territory, do you think we would pay her for it? We were then a weak nation, and it was cheaper and better for us to recognize a right that did not exist in fact than to go to war. But what should we do to-day, sir? We should not pay France four millions nor forty millions nor any millions to evacuate the Louisiana purchase. We should say to France, "Your presence here is an intolerable nuisance, and therefore you must leave." That is all we should say.

How is it with this Dominion? That Dominion has become an intolerable nuisance. It costs us to-day to protect our northern frontier from smuggling more than ten million dollars a year; but that is not all. It is estimated that our Treasury suffers to the extent of \$40,000,000 a year by smuggling, notwithstanding this vast expenditure to protect that frontier.

Mr. President, nations are like individuals. Because my friend from Massachusetts owns a lot opposite mine he has no right to establish a soap-boiling establishment or other nuisance. I could appeal to the law and have that nuisance abated. Just so it is with nations. If a nation is strong enough to abate a nuisance it abates it. Are we strong enough to abate this nuisance?

But again, sir, this Dominion is antagonistic to our institutions. Establish a dominion there, connect this whole territory into one

great Government, with a royal scion at its head, with its standing army, with its royal institutions, and the effect would be to compel us on our border to keep standing armies, to keep a force which we should not otherwise be required to keep. It would be a standing menace to this Government, a menace that we ought not to tolerate and will not tolerate.

Mr. President, notwithstanding Great Britain has no title, notwithstanding she never had a title to any portion of this continent, if she will quietly leave it, quietly roll up her flag and carry it away, then we will say to Great Britain we are ready now to meet you in peace, in harmony, and in amity; but if you undertake to establish a dominion upon this continent, with royal institutions, you must be prepared to maintain that dominion by a force superior to any force that the United States can bring to bear against it.

Mr. President, it is said that the Dominion proposes to send three or four or five or ten thousand men up into the Winnipeg region to overthrow that government. I hope that that is not true. I hope that the Dominion will undertake to do no such thing. But suppose she does, there is a vast immigration going up into the Winnipeg region; I cannot tell how great it is; but buffalo are abundant and game is abundant, and immigrants are going up there in great numbers; and as they are obliged to subsist by hunting they all go well armed; and then there are between two and three hundred thousand Fenians, who are, as I am informed, about to emigrate *en masse* to people that vast territory, and for the Dominion to send five or ten thousand men up there is simply to sacrifice them. Sir, it would be equal folly for them to send twenty or thirty thousand men. Every single man that goes there will become a permanent occupant of the soil; not one will ever come back. They will all rest there when they get there. I hope and trust, in the interest of humanity, that they will not undertake to send any force there less than one hundred thousand regular British soldiery. Then they might have some hope of making a stand in that vast region; that is to say, if the people of the United States should not protest; and if they did one hundred thousand would be no better than one hundred.

Mr. President, what is the condition of the United States with regard to all other nations? I was conversing one afternoon with some Prussian officers, and among other things they said to me: "How large is your Army?" "But," I said, "forty thousand men." They inquired, "How many reserve?" I answered, "A million." "Ah," said one of the officers, who spoke English very well, "I mean how many officers." "We have officers for two million." "No; but I mean experienced officers." "Yes, I mean experienced officers; every one has been in battle." "But," said he, "your troops are militia." I replied,

"Certainly, they are militia; but they have all seen four years' service in actual war." "But militia cannot fight regular troops." "Why not?" I inquired. "They cannot fight them at all," said he; "it is no use; militia cannot fight regular troops." Said I. "Sir, you were in the battle of Sadowa." "Yes." "How many men did you lose in that battle?" "Eleven thousand." "But," said I, "that was the skirmish before the battle; how many did you lose in the battle?" He said, "We did not fight but one day; the Austrians ran." "Well," said I, "my dear sir, I have not any doubt that your men would fight if they had any experience. In the battle of Sadowa you lost exactly the same number of men that General Grant did in the first day's battle of the Wilderness; on the second day, after sleeping on our arms, we lost fifteen thousand men; on the third day we lost about ten or twelve thousand men, and on the fourth we had a fight. It is the fourth day that tests the capacity of your troops for fighting." I could not make him understand that our troops had fought four days in that desperate manner, nor could I make him understand the difference between a Prussian regular and an American volunteer.

But, sir, I say to you here that the United States to-day have more men that have actually been in battle under fire than all the rest of the world put together, more experienced soldiers and more experienced officers. We are to-day the strongest military Power on earth. Let us open negotiations with Winnipeg with a view to its annexation either as a Territory or a State, as the resolution which I offer suggests; and my word for it, you will have no fighting. There is no desire on the part of any nation on the earth to fight with us on the land. Not a soldier will be sent. The British are taking away their troops, and have taken them nearly all away now. They have stopped fortifying the Dominion. They admit that they could not hold it thirty days after war was proclaimed. Then, sir, when we once take possession of this continent we shall hold it, hold it for the people, hold it for the occupants, hold it against the world.

Mr. President, the time has about arrived for us to proclaim to the world just what we mean. We have, as I before said, decreed that this continent of North America belongs to the people inhabiting it, and we have proclaimed to all the world, "Come in and take possession of this land, and all we charge you is the expense of setting up your metes and bounds."

Mr. President, this continent is ours, and we may as well notify the world now as at any future time that we will fight for our own if we must. We desire a peaceable solution of this and all other questions. We have been forbearing toward Great Britain; we have been forbearing toward all the world; but the time

has now arrived to assert the Monroe doctrine. I am glad that my friend, the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, concurs with me on this point. The time has arrived or nearly arrived when we shall say to all the world, "Hands off from this continent; it is ours, and we intend to possess our own."

Mr. SCOTT. I ask leave to move that when the Senate adjourns to-day it adjourn to meet on Monday next.

The VICE PRESIDENT. That motion is in order.

Mr. CHANDLER. I desire to-morrow to transact business from the Committee on Commerce. I ask the Senator to withdraw his motion in order to give us to-morrow for that purpose.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Chair will state that the Senate have already adopted a resolution reading as follows:

Ordered, That on Friday and Saturday next, immediately after the privileged morning business shall have been concluded, the Calendar shall be taken up for the consideration of general orders not objected to, and no other business shall be in order.

Mr. CHANDLER. Then I hope this motion will not prevail.

Mr. SUMNER. Oh, let us adjourn over.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Pennsylvania moves that when the Senate adjourns to-day it adjourn to meet on Monday next.

Mr. TRUMBULL. I hope that motion will be adopted. I do not think that we can gain anything by attempting to sit here as continuously as we do. I am sure so far as we are individually concerned it is calculated to break every man down who does his duty and knows what is going on in the Senate. If we can

shirk our duties here, perhaps we can bear up under them. We come here every day at twelve o'clock and remain sometimes away into the night, and every day to a very late hour for dinner—between five and six o'clock—besides having to attend the meetings of committees in the mornings, and we cannot continue that every day in the week. I hope the motion will prevail.

Mr. CHANDLER. It is well known to every member of this body that business is greatly behind. It is well known that there are a great number of bills that ought to be passed. I wish my friend from Illinois had been as careful of the health of the Senate when we had the Georgia bill before us and were sitting here night and day listening to speeches. I wish he had considered the health of the Senate then. But now, inasmuch as his bill is out of the way, he is at once greatly distressed for fear somebody will get sick. I am sure they cannot get any sicker than I was of the Georgia debate. [Laughter.]

I hope that this motion will not prevail, and that we shall be allowed two days for business. That is more than we have had yet in four and a half months. I do not remember that we have had more than one day for business during this session. Now, I hope that these two days which have been set aside for business will be devoted to the business of the Senate. I should be glad if the Senate would give to-morrow to the Committee on Commerce. But as a previous order has been adopted, and it will not be given to the Committee on Commerce, I hope we shall go on with the Calendar according to the resolution that has already been adopted, and shall not adjourn over till Monday.